



## Young Man with a Plan Newsletter

January 20, 2022

Wishing all a healthy and fulfilling 2022!



**As part of our holistic mentoring program, YMWAP works with each young man to develop an individualized Success Plan that addresses the student's current year goals and his college and career interests and aspirations.**

**Here, YMWAP Assistant Director Des Kennard answers questions about the Success Plan.**

**How does the Success Plan work?** YMWAP's Success Plan is a form we developed of about 10 questions about academic, college, and career interests, mental health status, and goals. Students fill it out initially in 9<sup>th</sup> grade and update it over four years. It's simple but powerful for a few reasons: 1) it communicates to kids that we care about their future; 2) it makes them think and learn about college and career interests; 3) it helps hold them accountable to goals they identified as we check in on it over time.

**How do help young men understand different careers?** Most of the young men in our program have very little visibility to careers other than the most obvious—doctor, lawyer, police. To introduce them to other careers we have Men of Color Career Night. We help connect young men with good summer jobs. We bring in guest educators to talk about their careers in real estate, finance, IT, filmmaking, and education. And, through an EdVestors project, we developed a growing career library of hundreds of jobs in many fields (IT, health care, engineering, art/design, business, trades, criminal justice, etc). These job descriptions include education needed (ranging from certificate programs to graduate degree), local places to work in that job, skills needed, typical day, and average salary.

We also help them think through their career interests. As part of my professional development, I just received certification in Career Coaching. The program introduced different tools to use in career discussions; for example, one focuses on aligning personality with work—are you investigative? artistic? enterprising?, social?, etc.

**What are YMWAP grads doing college and career-wise?** Our grads are in college studying engineering (civil and biomedical), fashion design, business, counseling, finance. They are working in IT, auto and aviation mechanics, for BPS, and in the military. Our seniors have expressed interest in cybersecurity, HVAC, graphic design, and entrepreneurship. They are looking at Year Up. Many are more hesitant about investing in college than they were before the pandemic.

**What is the biggest challenge in success planning?** It's sometimes hard to work with students whose dreams do not align with their skills or with reality. So we can suggest some other career fields that may use similar skills to what they have identified, and encourage them to make their music, play sports or trade stocks as a side job or hobby while pursuing more growth-oriented fields. One large challenge is Boston's rising cost of living, especially housing, which creates real difficulty for low-income families and students who are trying to progress economically.

**What are the most important messages you're giving kids?** It's all about hard work, integrity, showing up and being a man of your word. We encourage them to get out of their comfort zones (which are unfortunately even more reduced due to Covid). We tell them not everything is going to go their way 100%. We talk about growth mindset and being a lifelong learner. Alumni return to YMWAP and give current students the same messages which makes a big impact.

**Great news! Life Science Cares Foundation ([lifesciencecares.org](http://lifesciencecares.org)) has awarded YMWAP a \$60,000 grant! We are very honored and look forward to an enriching partnership.**